

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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London Summit: Prospects for a Declaration
on International Terrorism [redacted]

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Summary

In the aftermath of the killing of a London policewoman by shots fired from the Libyan people's bureau in London last month, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has announced that she intends to raise the issue of greater international counterterrorist cooperation at the London economic summit on 7-9 June. At previous summits, most of the participants agreed only reluctantly to include terrorism on the summit agenda, but a greater level of concern in some countries, such as France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, about increasing international terrorist activity probably will permit the subject to be broached with fewer objections this year. Although prospects appear poor for agreement on collective, punitive measures such as trade sanctions against states that sponsor terrorism, summit participants may agree on a joint call for an international review of specific provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on diplomatic privileges and immunities. [redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the
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An Unwelcome Summit Topic At Best

Thatcher's intention to put terrorism on the summit agenda is somewhat at odds with the outcome of this year's final meeting of the "Summit Seven experts on terrorism" which took place only a few days before the shooting in London. The group, which generally plays a peripheral role in summit planning, attempts to identify the terrorist issues of common concern that might be fruitfully pursued at the summit itself. Discussions of terrorism at previous summits have led to such documents as the Bonn Declaration on aircraft hijacking (1978) and the Venice Declaration on the protection of diplomats (1980).*

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The group had some problems agreeing this year on measures to increase counterterrorist cooperation. US interest in exchanging information on how each participant cooperates with third countries in counterterrorist training activities, for example, elicited varying responses. British, Canadian, and West German representatives reportedly approved, but the French objected that terrorism is inappropriate for an economic summit and that such exchanges are, in any case, beyond the scope of earlier summit agreements on counterterrorist cooperation. They probably also believe that information exchanges of this nature would compromise the strictly bilateral counterterrorist training programs France provides to several African and Middle Eastern countries.

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The experts' meeting also concluded that although concerted international action at times may be effective, most members, and especially France, would like to discard the Bonn Declaration which they view as inconsistently applied and not very useful.

* The Bonn Declaration states that in cases where a country refuses to extradite or prosecute hijackers and/or does not return hijacked aircraft, governments of the summit countries should take immediate action to cease all flights to that country. Summit governments also will initiate action to halt all incoming flights from that country or from any country by the airlines of the country concerned. This has been applied only once, in the case of Ariana Afghan airlines.

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The Venice Declaration denounces terrorist or criminal actions against diplomatic or consular personnel or premises in contravention of the norms of international law and practice. The summit governments resolve to provide "support and assistance" in situations involving the seizure of diplomatic or consular establishments or personnel. The declaration also recalls that states have the duty under international law to refrain from supporting or engaging in terrorism.

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Indeed, the UK currently is pressing to lift sanctions imposed on Ariana Afghan airlines under the Bonn Declaration largely because Kabul has threatened the UK with denial of overflight rights.

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Perhaps more important, however, is the general desire of the four West European summit countries to avoid moving too far toward formalizing a "Summit Seven" anti-terrorist group. They have indicated that more institutionalized multilateral intelligence exchanges or new anti-terrorist initiatives would be unnecessary duplications of effort. France, Italy, West Germany, and the UK already have established multilateral mechanisms for counterterrorist cooperation--the Club of Berne*, the EC's Trevi group**, and, with the exception of the UK, the Council of Five***. In view of such existing mechanisms, anti-terrorist effectiveness would not be significantly enhanced for a majority of the summit participants. In fact, the four West European states each have expressed on many occasions their preferences for dealing bilaterally with the US on terrorism matters rather than in a summit context. Thus, we believe most of the summit governments would welcome an opportunity to hold bilateral consultations--perhaps beginning at the summit itself--on such matters as President Reagan's counterterrorism initiative, for example, which has stimulated British interest.

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Problems with Sanctions

The summit participants almost certainly would not agree to adopt joint trade measures aimed at punishing or isolating states that sponsor international terrorist activity. Even after recent Libyan actions in the UK, increased concern among summit governments about Libyan leader Qadhafi's promotion of terrorism does not outweigh the importance of their considerable economic

* The Club of Berne, founded in 1971, is a nine-country, intergovernmental group of West European security services that specializes in information exchanges on counterintelligence and counterterrorism. Members include Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the UK, and West Germany.

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** Extant since 1976, the Trevi group is an informal outgrowth of the EC's political cooperation process and promotes multilateral cooperation on counterterrorism.

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*** The Council of Five--Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland, and West Germany--focuses on security of the Alpine states' borders against terrorists and criminals.

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and political stakes in Tripoli. This fact, along with strong doubts about the effectiveness of trade restrictions in achieving political and economic goals, suggests that disapproval and outrage over state-sponsored terrorist actions will not translate into significant action. Indeed, despite British interest in action against Libya, Foreign Secretary Howe has stated that trade sanctions--other than a ban on any new arms sales--are not being considered. [REDACTED]

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Of all the summit countries, Italy would be the least willing to alter its historically strong ties with Tripoli. Rome has no interest in discouraging Libyan purchases of Italian goods, which totaled \$2 billion in 1983. Libya, in turn, is Italy's third-largest supplier of crude oil and petroleum products and, according to the US Embassy in Rome, also holds a 12-percent interest in FIAT. The presence of some 15,000 to 20,000 Italians in Libya would give Rome pause even in the absence of economic interests. Rome takes seriously Qadhafi's threats to British citizens. [REDACTED]

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France and West Germany also would not subscribe to trade measures aimed at Libya or other Middle Eastern states sponsoring terrorism. Libya is the second-largest oil source for West Germany, and Iran is a key market for West German goods. France's trade with Libya is limited, but Paris has always opposed the principle of sanctions and would be even more unwilling to participate in an embargo that might upset the delicate negotiations under way with Tripoli in an effort to break the stalemate with Chad. In two separate incidents last year, Libya seized a number of French and West German nationals in retaliation for arrests of Libyans in France and West Germany. In both cases, Paris and Bonn released the Libyans in exchange for their own nationals. Any actions against Libya presumably would prompt similar acts which the French and West Germans clearly would rather avoid. [REDACTED]

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Canadian economic interests in Libya, Iran, Iraq, or Syria are limited. The Canadians nonetheless object in principle to the concept of trade sanctions, largely because of their own dependence on an active international trade market. Japan probably would reject the imposition of trade sanctions as well, having been reluctant in the past to subscribe to any measures not universally adopted. In addition, the volume of Japanese exports to Iran is second only to West Germany's among the summit nations, and Japan is by far more reliant on Iranian oil imports. [REDACTED]

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EC Consultations

British Foreign Secretary Howe raised the question of Libya and state-sponsored terrorism with his EC counterparts in Brussels on 14-15 May. A top Foreign and Commonwealth Office official informed the US Ambassador in London this month that Howe is urging the other EC members to begin laying the groundwork for a broad diplomatic campaign against state terrorism. At the EC Political Directors' meeting on 17-18 May, the British also reportedly floated a proposal on summit treatment of terrorism. Both meetings afforded the UK an opportunity to assess prospective French, Italian, and West German support for a British initiative on terrorism at the London summit. [REDACTED]

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A Possible Outcome

Although the idea of trade measures against state sponsors of terrorism is unacceptable to most summit countries, they may agree on a joint declaration on international terrorism. At British urging, most participants probably will be willing to make a broad denunciation of government support for terrorist activities, although probably not naming specific states. [REDACTED]

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The UK also has stated that it will not seek formal changes in the Vienna Convention--a process that could take years--because of a desire to avoid jeopardizing sensitive areas of international consensus. Nonetheless, Thatcher probably will seek approval for a review of existing treaties, agreements, and declarations that define diplomatic privileges, immunities, and protections. Accordingly, the majority of summit countries probably will agree to a declaration of intent to explore and identify international standards of diplomatic practice and behavior which could be more rigorously enforced. [REDACTED]

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